

CLAIMS

1. (Currently & Previously Amended) A method of producing a vehicle mat comprising the steps of:

providing a sheet of thermoplastic material, said sheet having a first and second side, said second side having a plurality of nibs extending therefrom;

[locating] placing said sheet in [proximity] contact with a contoured molding tool having one or more sidewalls that extend upwardly from a flat base and a top surface, said first side directed toward said sidewall and top surface of said tool and said second side directed away from said tool;

heating said sheet; and

C1 drawing said sheet toward said tool until said sheet is substantially shaped to the contour of said sidewall and said top surface of said tool.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said thermoplastic material is a thermoplastic elastomer.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said sheet is drawn toward said tool by differential pressure.

4. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one vacuum aperture is formed in said tool, and wherein said sheet is drawn toward said tool by applying vacuum pressure through said vacuum aperture.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said tool is a male tool.

6. (Cancelled.)

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said sheet is a blank for producing at least one mat.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of cooling
~~said sheet and removing said sheet from said tool.~~

9. (Currently & Previously Amended) A method of producing a plastic vehicle mat comprising the steps of:

extruding a sheet of thermoplastic material between a pair of rollers wherein one of said rollers has a plurality of indentions to form nibs on a first side of the sheet;

[locating] placing said sheet in [proximity] contact with a contoured male molding tool having one or more sidewalls that extend upwardly from a flat base and a top surface, said first side directed away from said tool;

heating said sheet to a plastic state; and

c1 drawing said sheet toward said male molding tool until said sheet is substantially

shaped to correspond to the contour of said sidewall and said top surface of said tool.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said thermoplastic material is a thermoplastic elastomer.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [9]10, wherein said thermoplastic elastomer is a blend of a linear low density polyethylene and thermoplastic elastomers.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said sheet is drawn toward said tool by vacuum pressure.

13. (Currently & Previously Amended) A method of producing a part comprising the steps of:

providing a sheet of thermoplastic material, said sheet having a first and second side, said second side having a plurality of nibs extending therefrom;

[locating] placing said sheet in [proximity] contact with a contoured molding tool
~~having one or more sidewalls that extend upwardly from a flat base and a top surface,~~
said first side directed toward said sidewall and top surface of said tool and said second
side directed away from said tool;

heating said sheet; and

drawing said sheet toward said tool until said sheet is substantially shaped to the
contour of said sidewall and said top surface of said tool.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said thermoplastic material is
a thermoplastic elastomer.

C1 15. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said thermoplastic material is
a blend of a linear low density polyethylene and a thermoplastic elastomer.

16. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said sheet is drawn toward
said tool by differential pressure.

17. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said vacuum pressure is
applied through vacuum apertures in said tool.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said tool is a male tool.

19. (Cancelled.)

20. (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of
cooling said sheet and removing said sheet from said tool.

21. (Cancelled.)